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ABSTRACT

This collection of seven abridged symposium papers discusses contemporary social conditions which affect the nuclear family and suggests directions for intervention. The introduction declares that the family remains the single most important unit in civilized society. Its destruction is seen to be the destruction of society as we know it. The papers (1) forecast family-related socioeconomic developments in the 1980s. (2) criticize supervisory functions of legal institutions which interfere with family supervisory functions, (3) advocate nurturant medical support services for young parents, (4) suggests ways to involve families in medical decision making, (5) survey the response of organized religion to issues related to family living, (6) criticize media influences on family attitudes and behavior and media exploitation of children, and (7) probe influences of the traditional family role of women on women's creativity. (The entire symposium was videotaped and is available for rent in segments of two hours each.) (Author/RH)

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Theme: A Changing Society and the Family

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IYC SERIES: PART I

A CHANGING SOCIETY AND THE FAMILY

This is the first of four issues which will be dedicated to the International Year Of The Child

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*These are abridged versions of papers presented at the Symposium, "The Family: Setting Priorities", co-sponsored by Children's Hospital Medical Center, Boston; St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, Philadelphia; and the Institute for Pediatric Service, Johnson & Johnson Baby Products Company, Piscataway, New Jersey, May 17 - 20, Washington, D. C.

The papers presented at this symposium will be published in the near future by Science and Medicine Publishing Company, Inc., New York, New York. Permission to reprint the abridged versions of these papers was granted by Science and Medicine Publishing Company.

The entire symposium was videotaped and is available in segments of two hours each. They are available for rental at $85.00 per session. For more information on the complete program or to order rental units, write Steven Sawchuk, M.D., c/o Johnson & Johnson Baby Products Company, 220 Entennial Avenue, Piscataway, New Jersey, 08854.

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The Family - How Relevant?

BY CLAUDE LEWIS

Most of us would agree that often, the family as we have known it, while not dead, suffers from seriously impaired health. There are those in the land who would argue that the whole concept of family life is outmoded, that the only significant entity in the community is the individual. Naturally, the individual is important. For what is a family but a collection of individuals who share love, common grief, interests, and parentage? But I feel confident that the family remains the singlemost important unit in civilized society. To destroy it--or to allow it to perish by default--would be to destroy society as we know it. While many households are troubled, there are hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of families in America that function well. However, many people live together as a family without engaging in family life--sharing joy, problems, growth, and most of all love.

One of the most troublesome situations families encounter today is competition, which is often destructive to family stability. There is perhaps no kind of competition that affects family interests more than "peer pressure." We often forsake the family in order to respond to this pressure. We spend our money to look good in the eyes of our peers, we dress to suit them, we enjoy certain types of recreation because our friends enjoy the same thing. In modern society competition comes from many sources. It comes from television, radio, newspapers, books, the theater, movies and nearly every other form of recreation or diversion. Work often forces the father, and sometimes the working mother, to spend long hours away from the home. All of these interests and demands play key roles in stealing the attention of individuals away from the family. As interests in these areas grow, interest in the family appears to diminish. Families often suffer more from a "communication gap," rather than the so-called "generation gap" we hear so much about.

We worship Walter Cronkite, we adore Barbara Walters, Reggie Jackson, and O. J. Simpson. But we pay scant attention to the man who provides us with food and shelter and a beginning in life or the woman who serves us so ably. There are those in the community who ridicule the family concept. They suggest in no uncertain terms that the family is obsolete, a throwback to the years when people didn't understand the need for individuality, that the family is irrelevant. All of this is precisely what led M.I.T. psychologist, Kenneth Keniston, to observe that "parents are not abdicating, they are being dethroned by forces they cannot influence, much less control." Responsibilities once taken for granted are now in the hands of the courts, social institutions, doctors and even the children themselves. There is even talk, in some circles, that mothers and fathers are "not qualified" to be parents. They lack the ability, some say, to control and guide their young. Such affairs might prosper in the hands of "experts" some insist, but look at what the "experts" have produced. They have produced, in large measure, a nation of non-people, a society filled with individuals unable to function in healthy ways, often unable to read, write, think, or speak, because of deep feelings of inadequacy.

Perhaps there is a need for us to get back to the basics that once caused us not to even question the legitimacy of the family and the role of the parent. There is a pressing need in America to give the children back to their parents. Many parents have lost their young to the school, to the playground, to the drug peddler, to the wine seller, and to every other competitor in the community.

Too many of us--and I am as guilty as the rest--believe that our chief obligation is that of a provider. But putting food on the table is only a small part of the total obligation we have to our children. It is necessary to provide nourishment, of course, but our obligation does not end there. Children are going to be

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Claude Lewis: Associate Editor, *Philadelphia Bulletin*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

heard from--one way or another. Some are going to do well in spite of their parents and in spite of the community that fails them. But a part of our realities are the casualties that we create in the community. Others, many others, are going to jail. Still others are going to graveyards because of rejection or simple family apathy. Many Americans are victimized more so by families than by the community or by "The System" upon which so much blame is heaped.

We live in a society that claims civility, yet whole groups of young men are involved in self destruction and self hatred. And what we fail to see is that if young Black males are dying daily all over America, so too, are young White males. Wherever you find deprivation and spiritual poverty, you find the most appalling statistics that we are learning too easily to live with. Children today want more guidance and control. Children today need better examples of how to live. They test us daily and very often we fail the test. When Johnny does not behave, often we fail to provide him with the very thing for which he thirsts: adequate punishment. Not excessive punishment, but that which tells him that someone cares enough to chastise him. When we are indifferent to his negative behavior, when we rarely have enough energy or interest to praise him for the good that he achieves, he doesn't know quite what to think or do. He becomes confused, disheartened, and even despairing. Many children perform poorly just to get our attention. They are crying out for help and too often we don't hear their pleas.

Only a few years ago this nation suffered a national nightmare. Our President resigned in disgrace throwing dirt on the Flag, on the White House, and on the entire Nation--and all the while the children of America were watching. Richard Nixon, the man, not the Republican, hurt us. It wasn't completely a matter of politics. It was a human event that touched us. What these men failed to understand was that we did not give them our Nation. We merely gave them a job. We desperately need decency in our land. And where can the children find it if not in the family? There is a great need for closeness, because the world is often a hard, cold place. Even if we don't admit that, the children are aware of it.

The family must never become a silent partner in the demise of our young. The family must be an advocate and a practitioner of improvement of the whole of society. And we must return from the isolationism that we have established to protect ourselves. We cannot continue to live as though we are only responsible for our own individual existence. We must seek new rules for all members of the family. We must not believe that most young people are more trouble than they are worth, as the media often imply. Unchecked, the media is the most dangerous of all disciplines we live under. They are the shapers of opinion and ideas. But we have a role to play in keeping the media honest and too many of us have abdicated that responsibility. We have a big job ahead of us...in doing it, we will be playing a significant role in saving America. If we save the family, we save the Nation. We cannot save the family, however, if we do not make demands on other institutions that guide us. Allow the family to suspect it is no longer important or significant and it will *become* irrelevant. Spread the word, the family is more relevant than ever because of the need for stability in the home, for guidance, for a sense of purpose and a greater sense of worth.

Economics and the Family–What's Ahead?

BY RICHARD J. WALD

Spring, 1979: In another few months, this new year will end, and with it, the decade of the 1970's. This decade in so many ways has been true to the prophecy of Alvin Toffler in *Future Shock* (1970): change will be the most enduring event of our era. In the economic arena, certainly that has been the case. While the 1960's soared economically, carrying most American families to levels of affluence they had previously only fantasized, there was a dramatic change of direction in the 1970's. Despite the income increases over the past eight years, in terms of buying power most families have merely marched in place, and will end the decade not much ahead of where they were in 1969. What has been the economic record of the past ten years, and what might American families anticipate in the decade ahead? Let's look at some of the underlying forces and the directions in which they point.

We can begin by looking at the income figures for the typical middle class family. Table I shows that gross income went from $9,867 in 1970 to $16,009 in 1977, an increase of 62% or almost 8% per year. This is quite a significant and reassuring increase. But after adjusting for inflation, it is apparent that at the end of the decade, real income has not grown significantly from what it was in 1970.

Thus the typical middle income family has been confronted with a dramatic change in circumstance. During the preceding decade, real income grew at an average annual rate in excess of 4%. It was this steady real income growth which gave substance to the family's feeling of "getting ahead," and supported its rising standard of living. On the other hand, the performance of the economy in the 1970's has forced drastic changes in many families' consumption patterns; they have been forced to make some very tough trade-offs. Though the reality of what was happening was often hidden by the inflation in wages and salaries, prices of food, clothing, housing, health care and all other necessities quickly caught up with or surpassed the income increases, and most families have just not been able to repeat their purchasing behavior of the 1960's.

What about the next ten years? Can we expect the growth rate of gross income or disposable personal income (the expression economists use for gross income minus taxes) to pick up again? Let's look at Table II. It shows the projected growth rate of disposable personal income for the coming decade. As can be seen, if the projection is correct, the 1980's will prove to be far less bountiful than the 1960-1970 period. There are many factors operating against a return to the growth rates of the 1960's. In addition to such considerations as the higher cost of energy and imported raw materials, and the need for large anti-pollution and occupational safety investments,

TABLE I

Income Pattern of a Typical Middle Class Family

	1970	1977	Total Change - %	Annual Change - %
Gross Income (Current dollars)	$9,867	$16,009	†62	†7.8
Gross Income (1970 dollars)	$9,867	$10,258	†4	†0.5

Note. From Bureau of the Census, Current population reports, Series P-60, No. 116, July 1978.

Richard J. Wald, B.Sc., M.B.A.: Assistant professor of Marketing, College of Pharmacy, University of Illinois. Vice President of the Industrial Marketing Division of the American Marketing Association.

there are also the lower birth rate, slowing expansion of the labor force, smaller productivity gains and a drop in the rate of capital formation, among other factors. These are among the underlying causes of the

TABLE II

Projected Growth in Disposable Personal Income

	Average Annual Growth Rate
1960 - 1970	4.3%
1980 - 1990	2.7%

Note. From General Electric Company, Mapcast, Economist Forecast and author's calculations. Quoted from L. Berry and I. Wilson, Retailing: the next ten years. *Journal of Retailing*, 1977, 53 (3), 13.

damaging inflation of the 1970's. The best guess would suggest that while good management may mitigate these forces during the coming decade, it will not be able to eliminate or reverse them. In general, the bulk of families cannot realistically expect to return to the conditions of those soaring 1960's in the foreseeable future.

This is, however, a very large and pluralistic country, and while the foregoing patterns are probably correct in the aggregate, generalizations risk obscuring certain significant forces at work. To get a more complete picture of future possibilities within our economy, we must consider some additional forces for change. Among these are population statistics, education, altered values, the composition of the work force, and lifestyles. All produce changes in the family and in the family's economic situation.

Over the past fifty years, there have been three periods of dramatic change in the birth rate in the United States, each lasting more than a decade (Business Week, 1978). The first (during the depression years of the 1930's) and the third (beginning in the middle 1960's and continuing to the present) were periods of very low birth rate, at times even falling below replacement rate. In between these two periods came the postwar baby boom, which produced a population bulge of such comparative magnitude that "the passage of its cohorts through the age cycle has been compared to a watermelon being digested by a boa constrictor." (*Business Week*, 1978) Table III shows the changes this group will make in various age classes of the population by decades until the year 2000.

It is significant here because this huge group is now entering the ranks of the 25-44 age group, and will continue to swell it through the end of the century. This age group is the fastest growing segment of the population. Within the past ten years, it grew in size by 56% and in the next decade it will increase by another 59%. On the whole, this is the most employable age group in the labor force and the most productive. It is also the group in which the bulk of family formation and births occur. By 1985, it is projected that there will be an additional 7.5 million husband-wife families in this age bracket (Linden, 1976). In spite of the present low birth rate, another baby boom is likely to occur during the coming decade because of the large number of women having babies -- not as many babies per mother, but many more mothers. Parenthetically, we should recall that it was the earlier baby boom of the 1950's and 1960's which stimulated aggregate economic growth and produced that decade of affluence. To the extent that the projected baby boom repeats that earlier scenario, the gloomy forecast presented earlier could be mitigated.

New families and growing families have a seemingly endless number of needs in every product and service category. This is the reason the 25-44 bracket has the highest spending profile (and the highest debt burden). However, partly because of a growing economy, partly because of its sheer size and partly because it will be getting ahead within the labor force, this age class will experience an aggregate increase in real spending power of 80% over the coming decade. By 1985, it is estimated that 50% of retail sales will come from this group (Linden, 1976). The obvious economic importance of this class mandates some additional attention to its special characteristics and directions in order to better estimate the effect it will have on the economy.

One major departure from past generations is the educational accomplishments of its members. It has been estimated that 25-year-olds in the labor force have an average of twelve years of high school versus an average of only nine years for those retiring (Berry, 1977). Of all family heads aged 25-34, 25% are college graduates and 45% have at least some exposure to college compared with 30% exposure of the age class ten years ago. More than one-third of this young group are already employed as professionals, managers or administrators (Linden, 1976), another major departure from earlier generations.

One important sub-group of these young adults is emerging and should be noted. These are the highly educated, affluent, two-worker, professional families. For example, two law school graduates or two physicians starting their first year of work in any major city will earn at least $40,000 annually and will go up from there rapidly. These young couples are an obvious exception to the income statistics quoted above. While they are professionals and managers, and highly career-motivated, at the same time their consumption habits and lifestyle in many respects resemble those of the wealthy class. Their spending patterns diverge sharply from those revealed by the median statistics or

TABLE III

Population Shifts in the United States, 1960 - 2000

	Population in millions					*Percentage change*			
Age	*1960*	*1970*	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*	*1960 - 1970*	*1970 - 1980*	*1980 - 1990*	*1990 - 2000*
Under 20	69	77	73	77	81	†11.1%	- 5.2%	† 5.7%	† 4.3%
20 - 24	11	17	21	18	19	†54.3	†22.6	-15.4	† 7.8
25 - 34	23	26	37	42	36	†10.4	†46.1	†13.1	-14.6
35 - 44	24	23	26	37	41	- 4.5	† 9.6	†45.5	†13.0
45 - 54	21	23	22	25	36	†13.3	- 3.9	† 9.9	†45.1
55 - 64	16	19	21	20	22	†19.4	†13.0	- 3.4	†10.6
65 and over	17	20	24	28	29	†20.4	†19.8	†15.4	† 3.9
	181	205	224	247	264	†13.4%	† 9.4%	†10.0%	† 7.2%

Note. Based on data from Bureau of the Census. Current population reports, Series P-25, using Series E for projection purposes. Reprinted from W. Lazer, the 1980's and beyond: A perspective. *MSU Business Topics*, Spring 1977, 24.

become obscured by the aggregates. Yet in some sectors, they can have considerable economic effect. For example, they tend to congregate in inner city areas, buying up old homes and refurbishing them. In San Francisco, Kansas City, Chicago, Brooklyn and New Orleans, to mention just a few cities, they have effected substantial rehabilitation of run-down housing in poor and working class neighborhoods, to some extent reversing the course of urban decay. Some urbanologists use the term "gentrification" (Wall Street Journal, 1978) to describe the movement of well-to-do young people back to central city neighborhoods and are hopeful that this trend will increase and help to revitalize the cities. As their numbers multiply, their economic effects will bear watching.

Berry and Wilson (1977) suggest that education is a revolutionary force for change because education is a value changer. Educated men and women expect more and different things from themselves. They maintain that our culture is changing from a "things-first, people-second" one to "people-first, things-second." They argue that environmentalism, consumerism, women's liberation, minority rights, and the restructuring of education, among many other similar movements, are not independent events, but rather related forces signaling the emergence of a new value system in America. Characterizing this new value system is a greater concern for quality of life, quality of work, and personal growth. They suggest that a reordering of priorities is occurring, not a refutation of money and the things money can buy, but a recognition that a big income does not necessarily equate with personal fulfillment nor a rapidly growing gross national product with a sound and healthy society. They maintain that these forces will spread through our institutions, producing significant changes.

Since it is the young adult group that has been among the first to embrace these new values in significant numbers, and since as previously noted, these young adults are such a large part of our population and have vastly increased spending power, it is important to consider the possible economic effects of an altered value system. While it is much too early to make any reliable predictions about the ultimate outcome of such a fundamental change, there is no doubt that our economy has already been influenced by these value shifts. For example, the need to stop polluting the environment and to clean up the rivers and lakes has diverted huge sums of capital away from the kind of investment which would increase productivity, employment and real income in the short run. This is a trade-off we knowingly undertake as a nation in order to improve the quality of life. On the other hand, we also believe that greater equality of opportunity in education and occupation will pay off in improved productivity and technological advance, among other benefits. The value shift has both economic costs and benefits. The eventual outcome will not be determined for a long time.

One unambiguous way in which these values are manifesting themselves is in the changing composition of the workforce. Not only are women working in greater numbers than ever before, but they have become a major part of the labor force. The working wife is a phenomenon of the past fifteen years (Lazer, 1977). In 1978, an estimated 46% of wives in families with spouses present were in the work force, up from 39% in 1970 and 30% in 1960. The belief expressed by some that wives drop out of the labor force when they have children is not supported by the facts, as indicated by the data in Table IV. Between 1970 and 1978, while the number of wives in the work force increased 21%, the number of working wives with children under 18

increased about 22%, and the proportion between the two stayed about constant at 55 to 56%. Thus more than half of working wives have children under 18. As Lazer (1977) notes, it used to be the working wife who felt the need to explain why she was working; today it is more likely to be the non-working wife who feels this need.

TABLE IV

Married Women, Spouse Present, in the Labor Force, in Millions

	1970	1978	Increase %
With Children under 18	10.2	12.5	22.2
Total	18.5	22.4	21.0
Percent with children	55	56	

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Current Population Survey," 1970 and 1978.

Why do women work? Some hastily reply that the only reason is economic. Certainly for widows, divorcees and wives in low income families economic necessity is an obvious motivation. However, even in more affluent families, working wives also make a significant financial contribution. As was shown earlier, in 1977 the median income for all families was about $16,000. In those families where both husband and wife work (46%), median income is about $19,000; where the wife does not work, median income is about $14,000 (Ginzberg, 1978). In 1976, 63% of the 9.6 million U.S. families with incomes more than $25,000 had both husband and wife working.

On the other hand, many wives work for reasons which have more to do with altered values than financial necessity. This does not mean that their incomes are not important, but rather that production of income is not the major impetus. Phrases like "becoming my own person," "giving meaning to my life," "creating my own identity" are often used to describe the overriding motivation these women feel. While this attitude is prevalent among wives (and most women) in the 25 to 44 bracket, it is also very common in every other age group. Many institutions and social developments within society reinforce the trend, such as the legal system (mandating equal opportunity), the educational system (adult education and the opening of advanced degree programs to students of all ages) and the womens' liberation movement. Table V shows the increase from 1970 to 1977 in the number of women in professional and managerial positions. The data are evidence of the devotion these women have to their careers and of the quality of their work. This trend for wives (and all women) to enter the labor force and to occupy meaningful positions seems most likely to continue and to grow.

On the other hand, there is also much evidence to the contrary. Divorce also creates the possibility for remarriage, and the vast majority of divorcees, both men and women, do remarry. While some young adults never marry, approximately 93% do at some time in their lives. Although first marriages tend to take place later, and the birth of the first child tends to be delayed (in 1960-1964, 67% of married women had their first child within two years after marriage; in 1970-1974, 48% had their first child within two years after marriage), interviews with representative samples of young married women reveal the vast majority intend to have families eventually. The number of first marriages is expected to increase considerably in the 1980's because of the size of the 25-34 cohort. The trend for wives to work will continue. Dual-income living and child-rearing does put strains on family life, but many sociologist predict the trend is a wholesome one. They feel that the growth of both marriage partners, their mutual participation in both child-rearing and financial responsibility, a more positive self-image for the wife and the opportunity for children to more fully experience both parents may result in happier marriages and healthier children.

While we can speculate about family developments in the years ahead and summarize the many opposing forces in various ways, obviously we must await the arrival of the future to know the outcome. Only one prediction can be made with certainty: just as the family has changed in preceding decades, it will continue to do so in the 1980's.

TABLE V

Women in Selected Occupations in the Work Force, in Thousands

	1970	1977	% Increase
Professional & Technical	4,298	5,836	† 36
Managers & Administrators	1,321	2,151	† 63

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Current Population Survey," 1970 and 1978.

In summary, what can be said about the effect on the family of all these forces for change? Certainly, the family is changing too. Any other outcome would be unlikely in view of the basic shifts enumerated above. Again, one must look at the young adult category to comprehend these changes, because that is where the major first-family formation takes place. There has been a decline in early marriage, a growing trend toward later marriage and an increase in living arrangements alternative to marriage. Those couples who have children tend to have them later, and to have fewer. Technology in the form of reliable contraception has made family planning commonplace and reliable. There has been a great increase in divorce, not only

(Continued on page 37)

Law and the Family: Intervention or Support

BY ROBERT A. BURT

Legal institutions supervise families by telling them what to do. In the event that they refuse, the law then intervenes in some forcible way--by removing the child, punishing the parent, establishing some mechanism to enforce its will. I would like to present some strong grounds for believing that that kind of supervisory role is not consistent with the basic functions that families are meant to provide, that is, the sensible rearing of children--and ultimately would like simply to ask for more inquiry before legal institutions continue acting on the assumption that their role is a helpful one.

The trend today is that, in case of conflict, children should be protected from their parents, and that lawyers and then judges should tell parents what should be done. The Supreme Court has heard argument this year in a case involving the rights of minors when their parents want to place them in psychiatric institutions. The law's traditional response has been that this kind of health care decision, as with health care generally, is in the unquestioned province of parents except where there is very obvious and gross danger to the child--for example in cases involving parents' refusal to give a child a blood transfusion on religious grounds. The notion that a court should decide whether a child should be placed in a psychiatric institution when the parents want to place the child and the psychiatrist is willing to take the child is quite a novel idea; and yet two lower federal courts have already ruled in favor of that position.

This general attitude favoring legal intervention in family problems is based on the view that when there is a potential for conflict of interest between any two parties, an objective third party should intervene to sort things out. Who is better trained--so lawyers believe--to sort things out objectively than lawyers and judges?

The above case is not alone. There are a number of other types of cases that have traditionally been the province of parents that are now brought before a judge: participation of children in medical research: the authorization of extraordinary medical procedures (for example, there is no place in the country now that parents can authorize a kidney donation from one sibling to another without getting a court order); the treatment of anomalous newborns--Downs Syndrome babies, rubella babies, spina bifida babies--a terribly trying and difficult issue to be sure, which does not admit to any easy answers.

These novel and troublesome cases involve limited numbers. But there has been a traditional and widespread acceptance of legal intervention in family conflicts.

Consider the role of courts in divorce custody not simply to decide placement between two disputing parents but to take on the task of long-term supervision of the divorced family. This has occurred for a very long time in this country because of the ease with which courts are willing to re-open custody disputes in order to investigate the so-called "best interests of the child" and to make such specific decisions as who should have visitation rights, for how long, and whether the child should go to summer camp or to the noncustodial parent for the summer.

Consider also the role of courts regarding child abuse and neglect. The campaigns for mandatory reporting laws first for child abuse and then for

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child neglect affect all professionals in their dealings with children. The premise here again is that children are in significant danger of being hurt by their parents--the lawyer's talisman of potential conflict of interest. The lawyer's answer is to move them into the legal system where a judge is willing, and oftentimes even eager, to tell parents what to do.

Let me now suggest some of the grounds for my skepticism that this general movement to invoke the law is likely to help children. First of all, with regard to divorce custody matters--the present kind of continued intervention from the courts is notorious for encouraging prolonged and bitter battles between adults who use their children as pawns in the controversy. The law does this, rather than systematically dampening down conflict between the parents and setting up a structure that would lead them to work together.

What about abuse and neglect? Here it is clear that many children are in serious trouble, that some kind of mechanism of outside intervention is called for. But what kind? Because courts (and social service agencies) now assume a dispositive role--ordering families around--they willingly use foster placement as the easiest response for a suspected abused or neglected child. The child is pulled out of his home for a short time or even a long time, during which no services are given to the family, and then moved from place to place. The child looks like he is in trouble; it's hard to work with these families or to trust them; when in doubt, order people around, move the child out. 4

The severe, even irremedial emotional damage inflicted particularly upon young children deprived of continued stable contact with a parenting adult has been extensively documented by the behavioral sciences and yet foster care agencies continue to ignore these simple home truths.

It is ironic indeed that courts and related agencies justify intervention in order to protect children against emotional harm when the intervention itself inflicts considerable emotional harm. What is it that these agencies think they are doing? The New York City Controller's report stated that city foster care agencies indicated at the beginning of 1975 that some 5,700 children in their care were ready for adoptive placement, but at the end of that year only 953 had been so placed. The Controller concluded that this discrepancy was so enormous that it leads one to question the agency's seriousness of purpose.

Consider another example. Many of us are familiar with the terrible history of state institutions for retarded children in this country. Litigation has been brought in the last several years in New York State and Alabama. When one reads the records in those cases, detailing the kind of incredible nightmarish brutality in those institutions purporting to be taking care of needy children, one has to ask, what in the world is going on here? What explains this incredible difference between the pretensions of state intervention--pretensions which I don't believe are self-consciously hypocritical--and the results which are simply nightmarish, unbelievable?

The standard answer has been that the problem is one of insufficient funds, technology and expertise--a typical American answer--more and more funds to provide more and more people to tell parents what to do. I want to suggest that the problem comes not from insufficiency of funds or technical knowledge, but rather from the willingness of courts or legal institutions to act as surrogate parents, as decision makers.

Here is one further example of the law's easy assumption that it should be a surrogate decision maker in the interests of children. Two years ago, the Supreme Court, in one day, decided two cases involving whether a parent can legally veto a pregnant minor's decision to have an abortion. 7

In one case the Court ruled that the abortion decision should be given to the minor, but in the second case the Court upheld a Massachusetts statute which gave veto power to a judge to decide whether a minor was sufficiently mature to make such a decision. What was in the Court's mind in saying that parents couldn't second-guess pregnant minors, but judges could?

First of all, note the irony in a judge's decision that a pregnant girl is too immature to know her own mind but is mature enough to bear her child and rear it. But that irony aside, the assumption in the Court's and so many other people's minds, when they say, "Parents aren't fit in certain areas to decide for children, but judges are," seems to be that judges are "objective," not emotionally involved, and they--unlike parents--can apply the best considered expertise and produce good

4 Let me cite one statistic here. A year ago the New York City Controller's office made a study of the disposition of children in foster care in New York City. At that point there were some 35,000 children in foster care, approximately half of whom were from families whom court proceedings accused of abuse and neglect. The Controller's office found that 11,000 children or more than a third of all the city children in foster care, had been kept in that status an average of five and one-half years longer than necessary and that the possibility that these children would form long-lasting, emotionally necessary attachments to any nurturing adult were stymied by the foster care agency policy of moving children from home to home. These conclusions are not surprising. They have been reiterated with monotonous frequency over the past several decades not only regarding foster care agencies in New York City, but across the country.

7 The Supreme Court in one case called *Planned Parenthood vs. Danforth* stated that a parent had no legal right to veto because there was a constitutional right at stake here on the one hand, and there was the underlying reality of the likelihood of conflict of interest; the abortion decision should not be given to parents but should be given to the minor herself. On the same day the Court decided a companion case from Massachusetts called *Bellotti vs. Baird*. In that case the Court upheld a Massachusetts statute which gave veto power to a judge saying this did not necessarily transgress constitutional norms.

results.

The notion that *objectivity* is a greatly prized virtue in dealing with children is a premise that underlies the entire children's rights movement and has equally been absorbed in our general notions of child rearing. Parents today, particularly middle class parents, are very much imbued with the idea that in their child-rearing tasks they should become experts by consulting certified experts, by reading the best books in the area, and by following the rules. In fact, when a parent deals on a day-to-day basis with the turmoils, pleasures and problems of raising children, it's very hard to remain *"objective."* Luckily enough, because of the nature of family interactions on a day-to-day basis, the experts' claims of a generation ago that parents should be objective rule-followers didn't really do terrible damage to the children of my generation and yours.

The expansion of the child advocacy movement is not fueled by the idea that there are more parents abusing their children, but rather by the assumption that there *may* be some harm being done by parents to children and *therefore,* why shouldn't a judge intervene?--a subtle shift that implies intervention is costless because after all, there are objective rules for child rearing, objectivity is to be prized here and there is no reason not to intervene.

But there *is* reason not to intervene. Outside intervention hasn't worked. This is because the real power to affect children for good or ill inevitably rests with the adults who live with them day by day. The idea that an episodic intervener, a judge, psychotherapist or family counselor, can direct the parents and know that he or she is going to have a good effect, is wholly unrealistic. In many cases this is likely to breed covert resistance, forcing the intervenor either to admit defeat or to pull the child out, which in itself poses enormous developmental problems for the child.

But the problem goes deeper. The very objective attitude of the judge (or judge-like supervisor), itself breeds harm to children. When a judge or a person working in a child-care institution says, "I am the decision maker for this child," he can also say, "I don't have to live day by day with whatever consequences come to the child from my decision. I have power over this child, but this child has no power over me."

I don't think that any parent in his deepest heart can believe that. All parents who live with children sense this--that children have enormous power over parents, and this seems to me to be the basic psychological constraint against the kind of abuse we see in our state institutions for the mentally retarded or in foster-care agencies' willingness to yank children from home and move them from place to place. Indeed many foster care agencies justify moving a child from one foster home to another because the child is becoming too intensely involved with his foster care parents and therefore is not being sufficiently objective. He is held in limbo for the happy, magic day that his natural parents reclaim him or the agency decides to send him back.

There is a sensible role for legal intervention in families to protect children, and that role need not depend on parents' willingness to accept intervention. The law could investigate parental conduct and require parents to meet with child-care professionals and bring their child for evaluation on a regular basis. These interventions would focus expert attention on the family but withhold power from the experts (whether trained in law or some other discipline) to issue binding directives to parents regarding their conduct toward children. The law would be limited to giving advice--though it could invoke authority to make sure that parents heard the advice, even if they could not be forced to act on it.

"What about parental child abuse," objectors might ask. But even in this most difficult area, there are important virtues to the approach I am urging. Let me illustrate this anecdotally. Several year ago when I first began to educate myself in this area, I visited the National Center for Child Abuse in Denver. This is a mecca for students of the problem generally. Drs. Kempe and Steele at this Center first identified what they called the "battered child syndrome" in the mid-50's, and their work gave initial impetus to the national attention that this problem now has attained. The most interesting and innovative aspect of their program--the aspect that particularly led me to seek them out--was their treatment technique. Rather than moving immediately to take even severely battered children from their parents, the Denver group pours intensive resources into the family, including both professional and paraprofessional workers who visit the family daily and are always on call. This kind of effort is very taxing and very worrisome, but it has been enormously rewarding; they report successes with the most difficult, most apparently intractable families.

How were they led to develop this program, and to invest the extraordinary financial and emotional resources in it to assure its success? I have a hypothesis, though I cannot prove it. I went to Denver with a lawyer's curiosity and with the assumption that since the Denver Center was regarded as a model for treatment throughout the country, it would equally be esteemed as a model by local courts. I asked the people there to describe the kinds of collaboration they had developed with the local courts and was surprised to hear that they had no success in developing close ties. They complained that the Denver court personnel simply ignored them and, in particular, could not be

moved, at least in the early days of their work, to share their sense of urgency regarding the welfare of the abused children. They were, as they described it, immensely frustrated by the unwillingness of the local courts to believe that any child was ever in danger from his parents.

This history led me to speculate about the serendipity of their dealings with the local courts. Because the local courts, for whatever reason, refused to intervene in cases where the experts felt intervention was desperately needed, the Denver experts had to invest incredible resources and be willing to take apparent risks, that led ultimately to their therapeutic successes.

If the law generally adopted a self-denying ordinance, limiting its authority to investigating families, and thus bringing possibly endangered children to the attention of outsiders (as the mandatory child abuse reporting laws now do) but withholding power to supersede parents' wishes in dispositions of their children, we would find many such serendipitous results as I described at Denver. In many cases, parents can be moved to work with rather than against the experts and children can be helped much more reliably than the sorry history of current interventionism by the experts now promises.

That is a hypothesis worth exploring before we join with the child advocacy movement in its current uncritical enthusiasm for legal supervision of families, ostensibly to safeguard children but without the capacity to accomplish anything but compounded harm.

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(Continued from page 33)

among first marriages, but among subsequent marriages also. Some economists feel that women's increasing incomes have a negative effect on fertility, and certainly some couples have made a conscious decision in favor of careers and incomes rather than children. Womens' increased enconomic independence has given them a freedom to leave unhappy marriages which was unkown to their mothers. All of this is offered as evidence by those who maintain that the institution of marriage is crumbling.

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THIS WE KNOW:
THEREFORE
THIS WE SHOULD DO

International Year
of the Child 1979

This is one of a series of articles commissioned by the Association for Childhood Education International, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the U.S. National Committee for Early Childhood Education [OMEP], for publication during the International Year of the Child. Eight authorities on child and family life contributed statements about what we should be doing for our children.

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REACH OUT TO NEW PARENTS

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We now know that the periods of pregnancy, birth and early infancy are critically important times for a mother, a father and their infant to learn about each other. The kind of nurturance parents provide will influence the quality of their baby's attachment to them, which in turn will affect not only the baby's capacity to nurture his or her own offspring, but also the baby's ability to relate to society in general. An opportunity to improve our society and to provide a better future for our children certainly resides in the critical period around delivery. Even severly stressed and deprived young parents can generate coping energy and eagerness to nurture, focused around the birth of each new baby.

We must begin to pay attention to the kind of support we provide for young parents at the time of pregnancy, delivery and during the first months of the baby's life. Many of us have lost the support system of an extended family society, of the pioneering culture that looked out for its members in crises; and we have *not* replaced it. Physicians, ministers and community groups have not really considered their opportunities for nurturing those who in turn must nurture their young in a complex, competitively demanding and rather goalless society. Until we consider this period as an opportunity for upgrading the *quality* of life as well as for surviving, we shall continue to play a grossly inadequate supportive role for young parents.

Rather than simply set up educational opportunities for parenting, or advice-giving groups, we need to give young parents the feeling that *they* are important, that *they* have choices and can make them appropriately. In other words, we must provide them with advocates who want to help them bring out their own best assets. When parents feel good about themselves, they can pass on a good self-image to the baby. By the same token, when parents feel "put down," inadequate and angrily defensive, all of these feelings are passed on to the new infant and become a basic part of the infant's feelings about self and society.

We must give up our pathological medical model of looking for people's weaknesses and ignoring their strengths. Our missionary efforts to "help" high risk or underprivileged people can be an example of such destructive chauvinism. Few people can tolerate our pathological eyes, which are so expert at recognizing their weaknesses but ineffective in recognizing and backing up their strengths. When we reverse this procedure, especially during a potentially positive experience like childbirth and early infancy, we see how eagerly young parents can accept, even hunger for, a transactional model of support that recognizes their caring, their efforts toward coping, centered around the exciting opportunity for a new life via their infant.

We must provide better outreach, nutrition and preventive care education in pregnancy. We must give young parents a chance to choose and participate in the positive excitement of delivering and becoming attached to a brand new baby. We must give new parents purposeful, positively supportive information and choices about how to nurture and provide an optimal environment for their new baby. We know how to do all of these; we have the expertise, the professionals to do it. Our task is to provide the political and financial resources to set up programs for nurturing the nurturers, so that they in turn can provide an optimistic, warmly supportive environment that will enable their infants to develop the solid assurance of being loved and of being able to love in return.

Bringing the Family Into Family Practice

BY RICHARD I. FEINBLOOM

Family practice is a new specialty in medicine, one which professes to consider the family as the unit of health and illness. Family practice is one of the primary care specialties and represents an effort to reverse or, more accurately, balance the overwhelming trend to disease-oriented (in contrast to people-oriented) specialization which has characterized medical practice and research in the United States since World War II. The title "family practitioner," the successor of the general practitioner, has been chosen largely to disassociate the new field, with its strong educational standards, from its predecessor. "Family practice" also implies that the family should move to center stage as an object of concern.

In a brochure which my partner and I give to new patients, the family physician is defined as a primary care physician who (1) serves as the physician of first contact with the patient irrespective of age, sex, or diagnosis and provides a means of entry into the health care system; (2) evaluates the patient's total health needs in the context of the family and community, provides personal medical care, and refers the patient when indicated to appropriate sources of care while preserving the continuity of the relationship; and (3) when referring patients for diagnosis or treatment to one or more consultants, assumes the responsibility for coordination and integration of the efforts of all the members of the health care team as well as serving as a clearinghouse for information flow among doctors, patients, and the patient's family. It is estimated that a family doctor can, without referral, care for between 85 and 95% of the problems presenting from an unselected population.

We define a family as a group of intimates usually living in one household who are related by birth, marriage, or choice. The definition includes living arrangements which may depart from a more traditional pattern of family life.

Our Principles of Practice--the governing constitution of our partnership--state that (1) we offer to everyone the opportunity to have a family physician, and that (2) we make a major effort in our work to support and enhance the integrity of families. By adopting these two principles we made a sharp break with contemporary medical practice in the Boston area which, at best, relates to families in the medical sense through a team consisting of pediatrician, internist, and obstetrician-gynecologist. How well this kind of team communicates with families is questionable. We differ even from other family physicians in our community by including obstetrics in our services.

How can a practice organized primarily to support families work, and what are the obstacles it faces? Can these questions be addressed on scientific as well as economic and humanitarian grounds? I will illustrate these points by relating our experiences with several families, by describing some advantages in providing a single doctor for the family, by sharing with you the value of being exposed every day to people of all ages with a variety of problems and concerns, and (this may surprise you) by speaking of medical decisions and gambles.

Several weeks ago I was asked to see an 81-year-old man living in a low-income public housing project. Mr. McMillan could not walk because of leg pain which he attributed to arthritis. What I found on arrival in his third-floor, walk-up apartment was a short, obese, disheveled, elderly man with massive swelling and redness of his legs from toes to hips. Serum oozed from sores on his inflamed shins. Unable to breathe when flat in bed, he had been sleeping upright in a chair for three weeks. One look told me that he was probably in advanced heart failure.

My reflex reaction was to send him immediately to the hospital. He pleaded with me to treat him at home, saying that his brother, an obviously retarded man in his sixties, had no one else to take care of him. I explained the risk in allowing him to remain at home,

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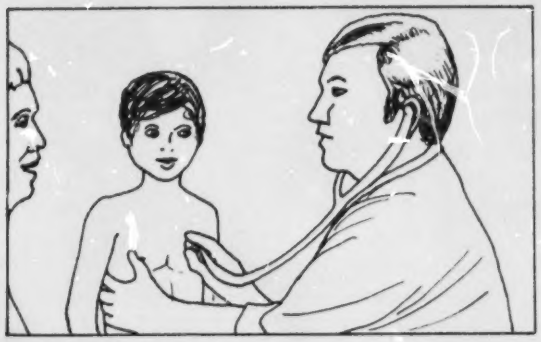
but when he continued his entreaties, I acknowledged that there is risk as well in going to the hospital--aside from the separation from his brother. (I thought to myself how often the hospital stay for the elderly leads to permanent institutionalization. I reminded myself also how often we doctors unwittingly exhaust older patients with diagnostic tests and frequent checks of vital signs, and expose them to the risks of drugs and other treatments.) So I told Mr. McMillan that it seemed to me it was a gamble either way, and I asked him to make a bargain with me. I would take the chance of treating him at home as long as he would agree to be hospitalized if in several days he was not improving. He agreed. Thus did Mr. McMillan participate in making this decision, and it was made in terms of his values and family responsibilities.

Mr. McMillan has gotten better over the past five weeks. He won't have to be hospitalized for this episode. His family stayed together. His brother did the shopping, helped with the cleaning, and did the dressing changes. Incidentally, we managed to save the Medicare system thousands of dollars. The average daily cost for congestive heart failure in our hospital is $277 (May, 1978). Yet this system reimburses inadequately for house calls and thereby discourages me from making them.

Last fall I was contacted for medical services to a 52-year-old woman in the terminal phases of cancer. She wanted to die at home, and her family was willing to provide care. During a home visit I warned her relatives--a sister and three daughters--that at some point they would be staring death in the face, but dying at home, I also told them, can be a very positive experience. I reminded them that we as physicians were available 24 hours a day. At one point when the patient angrily refused to eat, I was called in and observed that they had become so invested in caring for their relative that they were forgetting that the task at hand was dying. The patient's anger was a part of her dying and not a sign of their failure. She died peaceably in her own bed surrounded by loved ones.

The capacity of this family to perform what would be considered by today's standards an extraordinary feat was influenced a great deal by my sanction that this was worth doing. In this day and age such sanction appears to be critical. The family, I must emphasize, did the work. No one could have done a better job at less cost. They struggled to maintain their integrity--to stay together. The job of the family physician was to facilitate their achieving this goal with technical and emotional support.

They also had the opportunity to fully experience the death with a minimum of fantasy. A central concept



in psychiatry today is that unresolved grief is a major impediment to psychological health. Here the feelings were right out on the table and very much talked about. The death became a building block in family health and strength. It also gave me the opportunity, which I acknowledged freely to the family, to reexperience and reexamine my own feelings about death and dying. My willingness to share these experiences was supportive to them and to me. I became part of a family system which supported me as much as I did it.

Another option for which families have sought our support is in family-centered maternity care in hospital or at home. With respect to home birth, a controversial issue, we are offering this service to selected families in full recognition that the available data from this country as well as extensive cross-cultural experience support the safety of home births for the low-risk mother, especially so when the birth is preceded by careful prenatal care, sound nutrition, and individualized childbirth education.

We have incorporated into our obstetrical care, whether in home or hospital, the family-centered, non-interventive orientation which has been so well defined by Doctors John Franklin, John Kennell, and Marshall Klaus.* The major difference is that for us childbirth is just a single episode, albeit a very important one, in the life of the family. We regard birth as an extraordinary opportunity to build relations between doctor and family. In contrast, many obstetricians in this country have seemed almost obsessed with the task of "getting the baby out." To us, defining maternity care in these terms represents a very narrow view of the process. We see maternity care as an opportunity to facilitate the formation and continued growth of the family in communication, sexuality, nutrition and feeding practices and attitudes, safety, use of the health care system, and dealing with bodily complaints. We then have the great pleasure of following up on these themes in our contacts regarding the new family member. There are few other times in the life cycle when doctor and family have so many built-in contacts over time. Why let the bonding between family and professional be dissipated at birth?

I am delighted to know what happens next in the story. And on the practical level, doing obstetrics is one of the best ways to build up a new family practice.

In our maternity services, as in our care of the patient dying at home, we believe that we are performing the valuable function of creating the safe space within which families can take charge of their own destinies and come to feel better about their own capacities. We share with families decisions regarding their care. We are open to hearing their disaffection with vitamin K injections and silver nitrate eye drops. No families who have had the experience of participatory, family-centered care have said that they would want to do it differently. Even those who have required Caesarian sections have not complained about being railroaded into an unnecessary operation.

Towards no one group within medicine is mistrust and dissatisfaction expressed as much as it is towards obstetricians. This is puzzling to these members of the medical profession. Here they have made major advances in knowledge about the physiology and pathophysiology of labor and delivery, improved screening for abnormalities, and have increased the effectiveness and safety of necessary interventions. They should be loved by the public, and they are not. Why is this so? I believe it is so because obstetricians have lost sight of the family. They thought they could ignore the family and do it all themselves, while the family has been there all the time! It is as though each step on the road to greater safety and knowledge has given doctors the illusion that they could deny the capacity of the family to care for itself. The concept of family is singularly absent in obstetrical textbooks, which have swelled with technical information. One result is that physicians are running scared with one eye on the fetal monitor and the other on the specter of malpractice suits. The patient has come to be an adversary. However, once you make the family your ally and recognize that you need each other and that you can and even must share the inherent uncertainties about medical decision-making with families, then the antagonism melts away. Life becomes easier all around. The births that we attend usually end in celebration.

With respect to economics, whether in birth or in death, we find ourselves out of step with the reimbursement system. In the case of the dying patient, the family's insurance company initially refused to pay for my services in the home, even though the company and its subscribers had been saved many thousands of dollars of hospital costs, because the company had no provision for home care. Perhaps of even greater importance, it had no category to cover services to a family, only to individuals. But who really was the patient? It certainly wasn't just the dying woman. The company eventually reversed itself by special ruling and paid for the house calls. They also initiated a still uncompleted study of care at home. Nevertheless, this experience showed that in the world of third party payment, the family is not yet considered to be the unit of health and illness.

When we do a birth, either at home or for a short hospital stay, we save hospital costs. These are substantial; $373 per day in our hospital. The additional costs, small by comparison, for the birth attendant who assists us and plays an essential role are not covered by third parties. Doctors are paid handsomely for giving a spinal anesthetic and paid nothing for rehearsing the second stage of labor, which often can make an anesthetic unnecessary. It also can allow the couple to discover their own strengths and communicative capacities--once again strengthening the family. Furthermore, the unanesthetized and supported mother often enjoys the uniquely pleasurable sensations of the baby's passage through the birth canal. Again, reimbursement is designed for technically-oriented procedures, not for supporting and fostering family life. Where in any of the current proposals for national health insurance is the family made a concern? Why not? Isn't this important?

Regarding third party payments for obstetrical services, one practical problem we have faced is that payment comes only after delivery. This means that we may have to wait as long as a year after first meeting a family before we are paid. Insurers, too, seem to think that what is involved is "getting the baby out." This delay in payment creates a significant cash flow problem for a young practice and discourages us from providing maternity services.

A final word about reimbursement. Much of what we think is necessary isn't recognized by the third parties. We spend a lot of time working for our patients without actually being face-to-face with them in the office or home, the single criterion for reimbursement. For example, as coordinators of care we must carefully read old records and integrate them in our new charts, review laboratory results, speak with agencies such as the Visiting Nurse Association, be on the phone with our patients, have conferences with the family members, confer with consultants, and provide for health education and life style modification. I would estimate that only about 60 percent of our costed out time is paid for.

These issues are exaggerated in the care of the poor and aged. The reimbursement from the Medicaid system does not anywhere near cover our costs in providing care and is a real disincentive for us to accept Medicaid patients, a reality of life which we find very distressing. The elderly pose other problems. By definition they have lived long. There is more to know

about them. They are slower in dressing and undressing for examinations. For many, even getting to the office is an ordeal. Their memories are often impaired and history-taking prolonged. There are many more possibilities for error--in communication, for example--about prescriptions in a population in which there is increased sensitivity to the side effects of drugs. Old people need more time. This time in the long run may save time and money. These special time needs of the aged are simply not acknowledged by third parties. Nor are we given any incentives to save costs in relation to laboratory tests when third party payers are involved. In our practice, continuity of care allows us to be judicious in the use of laboratory tests because we know our patients and can stay in close contact with them. We don't need nor do we order x-rays for every case of pneumonia.

In short, we find the present reimbursement system to be out of phase with the task which the family doctor must perform and with the needs of families. If we really value families and family doctors, as I think the public does, then the system needs changing.

I would like now to discuss the question of decision-making. As family physicians desiring to include families in the decision-making process, we find the vocabulary of gambling to be useful in dealing critically with uncertainty. In order to be able to deal with uncertainty in the clinical setting, we are teaching both ourselves and our patients to think and act as gamblers. With Mr. McMillan this approach guaranteed that there would be choices and helped us to identify them--stay at home, go to hospital, don't be treated at all, etc. He and I became partners in facing the inherent uncertainty of medical decisions. We were gambling together, and even the words that I used made this clear to him and to me. I presented the benefits and costs of each choice and elicited his preferences of values. One value which he and I made sure would receive due consideration was that of family. This value is a major one in every case which I deal and at every stage of the life cycle. Thinking and acting as gamblers has permitted us to sharpen the identification of the family issues present.

In conclusion, I am consciously exploiting the opportunity afforded to me as a family doctor to maximize contact with members of a famiy, to know them better (and they me), and to bring the family into center stage in medical care. We are using the science of decision-making as a way of supporting families. Yet family is presently ignored in the thinking of insurance companies, government, and the medical profession itself. We need the support of all these institutions, and of the public as well, in order to do our job of bringing the family into family practice.

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Religious Participation In The Year of the Child

BY L. WILLIAM YOLTON

Among religious communities there is a growing concern for family life and the needs of children. An unprecedented effort to stimulate local activity is in progress, drawing together concerned participants at regional and national meetings. This effort will probably be ignored in the press and academic circles because it is in the religious sector of society and involves such out-of-the way places as Weirton, West Virginia, and Omaha, Nebraska (which are among the 20 locations for projects on the theme of The Child and Family Justice of the National Council of Churches).

In recognition of the United Nations International Year of the Child, religious groups will consider the family and children's issues over a period of several years. Many local experts are involved beginning with those who have ties to the church and synagogue. Popular resources are being developed, including audio-visual ones, and a network of interested persons is being identified, and politicized about children's issues for influence at the local and national levels. These activities are at least as important as the official observances being organized through the United Nations and by the child welfare and education establishment. Indeed, the religious influence may be more profound in transforming and maintaining norms pertaining to children and families than the influence of government or national experts.

Religion continues to be the dominant influence on popular values about childhood and families in America. After a decade or two of declining participation, church attendance has risen slightly. The Gallup poll indicates that in the past year 41 percent of the population attended church or synagogue in a typical week. Thus, the churches are the principal institution emphasizing family values which reach such a large percentage of the population. Alan Pifer of the Carnegie Corporation of New York supports this notion in stating that "churches continue to reach deep into the life of a large proportion of families and children across the nation" (*NCCC Chronicles*, 1979).

Unfortunately, religious institutions characteristically perpetuate conventional family structure and mores about politeness, obedience, chastity, and industry, rather than providing a transcendent system built with freedom and love. Even such new religious cults as the Hare Krishna, the Unification Church, Erhard Sensitivity Training or the People's Temple, do not provide models for new family organization but, rather, reinforce male-dominated families which subordinate children to adult interests and convenience. (The Unification Church is particularly interesting because of its central religious interests in the family as an archetype of spiritual relationship-a notion that combines Protestant missionary teaching with traditional Korean family emphases that preserved the culture against a millenium of alien occupation and oppression.) The cults usually adopt institutionalized patterns of established religion as a charismatic type of leadership is replaced by a bureaucratic one, the elite become influenced by worldly standards, and the popular "civil religion" creeps in among the general constituency. Eventually, a more radical experimentation in family life style is accommodated to popular norms. The informed and visionary studies of the experts in the highest reaches of national church organizations are undercut by a local indifference that resists change in family values. But, as the innovations are absorbed, they become part of that which is conserved.

The conservative attitudes of religion change as quickly as the imperceptible movement of a glacier. Accretions are accommodated to the icy forms and borne along with the rest of the values that religion supports. From time to time, even glaciers have sudden spurts of forward movement, brought about by accumulations of heavy snows in previous winters followed by thawing weather. Just such a remarkable

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progression is taking place now in the churches.

After a long period of quiescence dating from the early sixties, when family life movements were last prominent in the organized work of the religious establishment, comprehensive discussion about the family is again gaining prominence. Energy for internal programs and for influence on public policy has been devoted thus far to special, limited cases. Abortion, divorce, child abuse, teen age pregnancy, sex education, homosexuality, the rights and roles of women, and new life styles have filled the last decade's agenda. The remarkable success of the marriage encounter movement and of the divorced Catholics movement has contributed to the changes in the understanding of the family which are taking place among Roman Catholics. Parent effectiveness training, the pastoral counselling of clergy, and the acceptance of developmental theory in educational curricula contribute to an openness among Protestant and Anglican church members about family philosophy and the needs and rights of children.

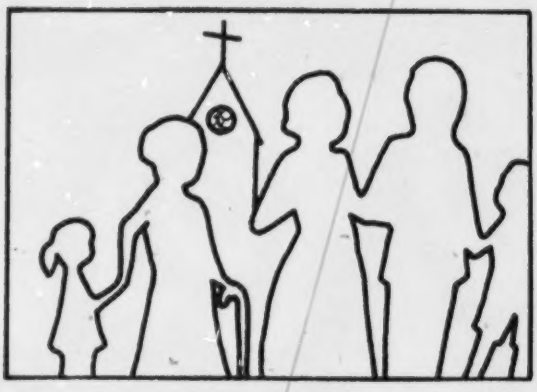
An important controversy which has emerged in nearly all the major denominations is the one over homosexuality. The threat to the family has been a major theme of those who define homosexual preferences as aberrant and sinful; others have come to the conclusion that gay and lesbian relationships are a licit, although minority, life style, and not intrinsically sinful, though like other sexual relationships and family forms, they may be occasion for sin. Although it would appear that religiously-sponsored suppression of gay and lesbian rights has been the outcome of the publicized controversy, the net effect may well be a more positive definition of the family, and a tolerance of unconventional life styles which were not acceptable a decade ago. Presbyterians, in their two major branches, the United Church of Christ at national and area levels, the Christian Reformed Church, and currently the United Methodist Church have all considered gay and lesbian rights, and specifically the issue of ordination of "self-affirming, practicing homosexuals." Though the formal decisions about the issues presented have been restrictive, the social effects of the controversies have been liberalizing, when one considers the reactionary starting point. The minorities of "liberals" who entered the discussions have themselves been sensitized to their own homophobia, and have been made aware of the prevalent repressive homophobia in the culture. The churches have reinvestigated their norms and have revised their views of scripture and tradition so that categorical condemnation of homosexual practices is limited. (It is unfortunate, nevertheless, that the subject of sexuality has been approached through a reaction to homosexuality rather than the development of an understanding of sexuality in its own right.) The 1978 United Presbyterian General Assembly, while rejecting the report of a study commission which proposed a case by case approach to the ordination of gay men and lesbian women, nevertheless condemned homophobia and supported civil rights for gays. (UPCUSA General Assembly, 1978, p. 21.)

Constituencies of gay persons have been identified and helped to come out of the closet. The avowedly liberal Unitarian Universalist Association has had a fully recognized Gay Caucus. Episcopalians and Roman Catholics have had active pastoral ministries to and with homosexual persons, and have formed such organizations as Integrity and Dignity. Other religious communities have had fewer but still significant gay support groups. A special denomination for gays, the Metropolitan Community Church, has developed over a decade, and is seeking recognition from other religious groups.

There will be two results from an acknowledgement that the homosexual life style exists at the edge of acceptable family patterns. One will be the development of an alternative to the blatant abuse of religious passion and prejudice to suppress civil rights for gays and lesbians. The other will be that a generation of students in theological education will have been awakened to the issue pastorally rather than polemically; and as leaders in years to come, will have a more informed understanding than their predecessors did. The interest in courses on sexuality and forms of intimacy, together with a surge of research will have a lasting and constructive effect, stimulating acceptance of pluralism in family types such as families headed by two women. Thus, while the immediate effect of discussions about sexuality, particularly homosexuality, has been to provoke repressive responses, the long term effect will be to create a new constituency that is informed and concerned about developing a responsible philosophy and theology about the patterns of intimacy in the human family. In a similar way, the Catholic Theological Society's study on sexuality, while having suffered from the withdrawal of the hierarchy's support, will have made its point in the same way that books banned in Boston used to sell the better for it.

Philosophies about the family do not have a monolithic pattern, even in the same religious denomination. While the right-to-life movement has garnered media coverage and support from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, it displays a one-dimensional approach to family ethics which is characteristic of old style, authoritarian ethical instruction. In contrast, the divorced Catholic

movement has displayed a sophistication and political sensitivity in the face of church opposition. Until 1977, Catholics in the United States who were divorced were denied full participation in the sacraments of the church, unless they were the "innocent party" and did not remarry. The Paulists, among others, sought with sensitivity to give these persons spiritual and psychological support, and even liturgical participation, so that they could maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. Though the questions of divorce and remarriage are not settled (Winiarski, 1978), there have been solid gains in developing a richer, pluralistic approach to marriage and family life.



Another of those influences provoking renewed interest in the family has been widespread acceptance of the structural developmental theories in the preparation of religious education curricula and in understanding moral and faith development (Yolton, 1977, p. 58). The family is considered the prime locus for the transmission of religious values, and the congregation is being reunderstood as an extended family. The biological family is subordinated to the spiritual and nurturing family with which the person eventually identifies himself. In the last decade, Piaget mediated through Elkind, Goldman, Kohlberg, and Fowler have been influences in the curricula of the United Church of Christ (the Shalom Curriculum), the United Presbyterian Church (Christian Faith and Action), and in Joint Educational Development, a consortium of a dozen denominations engaged in program and curriculum production (Christian Education: Shared Approaches). The Paulist Press has published popularizations of theory about moral and faith development, and they are recurrent themes in the meetings and publications of the Religious Education Association.

A consequence of this approach to catechesis and religious education is theoretical support for treating children as persons in their own right, rather than as potential producers or believers or contributors to the family, or for their cognitive ability to repeat undigested religious doctrine. There is a developing theology for appreciating early childhood as a time of developing spiritual capacity, an important component in the churches' provision of day care facilities. The World Council of Churches (a late entrant in observing the IYC) has picked up on the theology of children as the object of God's care, that they might be whole, healthy, and holy persons (WCC, 1978).

In organizing discussion about the family in conjunction with discussion of the needs and rights of children, the latter becomes subsumed under the former. Just such a conflation threatens in the religious emphases around the International Year of the Child. The responses to the Year of the Child have been varied and barely coordinated. For the last decade, the United Presbyterian Church has moved from internal political agitation on behalf of children, to a consulting committee in 1974, a study report in 1977, and local and regional study and action projects in 1977 through 1980. The United Church of Christ has funded and staffed special programs dealing with child abuse and with teen age pregnancy. The United Methodist Church will pursue half a dozen agendas including a National Conference on Ministries with Children, July 30 - August 3, 1979. The Catholic Year of the Family will be marked by a Conference of the Family and Social Mission in 1980. Lutheran denominations will develop packets of materials for the education of their members, and will sponsor model projects of social service. The National Council of Churches has facilitated a "Multi-Denominational Network" which met in October 1977 and May 1978.

The major emphasis of the National Council of Churches, and many of the member denominations, is the Child and Family Justice Project. Twenty local projects directed by committees of 18 people selected by the churches in that locality through their judicatories, "will determine what are the major dynamics...which interfere with families providing effective nurture to their children;" they "will educate people...about their conclusions, support...advocacy efforts directed at the conditions which...are most harmful to families," and "will evaluate their work...and prepare a final report" (NCC, Project paper number two, 1979). The participants will be gathered in six regional conferences and there will be a final national conference before the conclusion of the project in September 1980. The principal funding is through a grant from the Carnegie Foundation of New York for $250,000 which is supplemented by grants from the Ford Foundation and participating churches for a

budget of $570,000. The theoretical framework of the project is the report of the Carnegie Council on Children, *All Our Children*. That report focuses on the economic roots of the causes of distress in children, and did not have participation by the religious sector, especially ethicists, in formulating its analysis and recommendations.

There has been some jockeying for position among religious forces to influence the White House Conference on Families. Roman Catholic pressures are said to have contributed to the resignation of the Director, a competent professional who happens to be black, divorced and the mother of three teen-age children. Official participation by religious groups has been through the Coalition of National Family Organizations for a White House Conference on Families. The delay in convening the government-sponsored conference until 1981 will permit a broader base for grass-roots participation in the debate on whether or not there ought to be *a* family policy for the nation, and to formulate the many policy directions that are being suggested. William Sheek, Director of Family Ministries and Human Sexuality for the National Council of Churches, emphasizes the diversity of families as a factor in formulating public policy (1978). Considering constitutionally based traditions of freedom of worship, it is questionable whether any policy other than commitment to family diversity ought to emerge. The more equitable distribution of resources in a more just society will have fundamental impact on children and families, but should not be thought of as a substitute for a policy treating the subject of children and families directly.

The Presbyterian report (Consulting Committee, 1977) urged that, on the basis of a theology that considers children as persons in their own right, economic sufficiency is only one factor in a proper policy for children and families. In addition to reconsidering family patterns, great changes are needed in the systems of health care, education, justice, economics, and religion, if the needs of children are to be supplied on all levels. As a result of the many studies by persons in the religious communities we may hope for more insight in "fulfilling God's promise to children, as to all people, to be free, happy, creative persons dwelling in loving community" (*Church & Society*, Nov. 1977, p. 64).

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The Child and Family As Commercial Objects For the Media

BY SEY CHASSLER

Let us examine the ways in which the media--magazines and newspapers, radio and television--deal with children and families, that is, to put it simply, deal with *us*. What makes me very nervous is that as we become adults--participators in the community at large, parents, workers, professionals and scientists--we forget who we are and begin to look upon everyone else as outside objects to be manipulated until they yield some profit. The media are mirrors for our society and reflect our tendencies to regard each other as commercial objects.

Years ago when Sesame Street set out to teach children to read, write, and speak, it was hailed as a remarkable step forward in a world full of visual and aural nonsense. And so, perhaps, for a short while it was. But soon Sesame Street was forced to overproduce. Because it had to develop a new show every day, it placed its audience under pressure to absorb, and many children stopped listening. To pick them up again, Sesame Street had to make its material gaudier and louder, which again threatened to turn away listeners. Is this the fault of Sesame Street's producers and writers? Not at all. It is our fault because we have grown to seek from each other selfish gains rather than mutual support.

There are truly dreadful things in the media. *Hustler* magazine and *Penthouse* and all the others they had spawned, rip open the bodies of women and expose them to the ripped open minds of men. Those of us who care, deplore these things. Yet how much different is this kind of media disregard for the individuality of human beings from the way we do business in gerneral in our society? An advertising executive is quoted in *The New York Times* as saying, "When you sell a kid your product, if he can't get it he will throw himself on the floor, stomp his feet and cry. You can't get a reaction like that out of an adult."

Consider for a moment what we have just been describing: a children's television program that must increase its pressure on children in order not to lose its franchise hold on them; a group of magazines that must constantly increase their pressure on men (at the expense of women) in order not to lose them; an advertising community that must increase its pressure on families and their children in order not to lose its business. Is it among our priorities to have Archie Bunker as Chief Justice of the United States, or to see ourselves as he see us, not as children and families, but as entrapped objects, the male dominant, the female suppressed, the child barely existent? There is no justice in Archie's world, only a struggle for dominance.

In the July issue of *Redbook*, Margaret Mead wrote:

> There is, for example, the right of young, dependent beings to receive nurturing care -- safety, shelter, warmth, food, and above all, love and comfort and instruction. Reciprocally there is the right of full-grown adults to give and to share nurturing care--to have the means of providing others with safety and shelter, warmth and food, affection and comfort and instruction, in full measure. There is also the right of every individual to a recognized place to live in privacy as well as in communication with a family, a neighborhood and a community, and the right to share in the common concerns of kin and friends and neighbors. She is right, she recognizes the priorities, and the media *can* produce these right thoughts.

Where did we go wrong? Why are there groups of people in this country today who are at this moment seeking a waiver from the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act to primit 10 - and 11 - year-olds to hand-harvest short season crops? Why does the President of the United States set greater importance on a treaty relative to the Panama Canal than to the broken homes, the broken families, the broken children in our deteriorating cities? Why did it

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take more than 100 years for women to achieve the right to vote in this country? Why did we tolerate slavery? Why does our educational establishment settle for minimum competency standards rather than insisting that they be allowed to raise the standards of literacy and rationality? Why after 200 years are 51.3% of the citizens of the United States still not included in the Constitution unless the Equal Rights Amendment will be passed?

Is there a reason why the media treats children and families as objects for commercial ends? Is there a reason why we are having difficulties with the way we perceive children and families? Are there reasons why we are marrying later, having children later, paying less and less attention to home, health, and babies than we seem ever to have done before in our history? I suspect that our crowded, industrialized, pressured society has brought us to a condition where we may not want children *or* families at all. We want personal comforts, the love of nondemanding partners, the adoration of nondemanding infants. But beyond these it seems just too hard for most of us to get along. In this post-industrialized society, children serve no need or very little. Maybe we don't need families when we have the voice of television always with us. Television, after all, provides the sound of voices, the drama of human interplay, laughter, tears, advice, instruction, and even, if you stand close enough to it, a little warmth. We provide our aged with televisions to give them companionship and to hide them from our own discomfort. As for ourselves, mass-produced pornography, sensualities, and comforts have reached such a point that we hardly need partners at all.

And so not needing children or families or partners in the traditional sense we revert to the condition of Cain. Since he did not know about or need families and children, he was able to kill his brother with little care.

Is our massiveness, our crowdedness, our over-abundnace, our artificial companionships, our nervousness producing a condition in which we can discard those things for which we seem to have no need?

Children and families need food, shelter, clothing, protection, comfort, education, work, love, and care. We don't provide these things universally because it's just too difficult. Industrialists aren't in the business of delivering these things. Professionals don't have the time. The clergy dosen't have the power. Legislators are too confused. And the media don't deliver the real message. Television is irrational and greedy and opportunistic. Newspapers and newsmagazines deal with these serious matters as though all events are somehow accidental and momentary and for display purpose only. They deal with horrors of all kinds from the holocaust to the despair of children with a kind of grand innocence, detached and blameless. Scientific, professional, and some small specialized or larger conscience-stricken magazines do have courage and do look at matters with a degree of honesty, but they have the courage of weakness and impotence. They can speak up bravely because few listen to them.

There are almost one million children in this country living in the limbo of foster care homes, shelters, and inappropriate hospitals today. Add them to the millions more in our urban ghettos, in our mountain passes, in our rural junkheaps, and in our middle-class families whose educations are being neglected, for whom adequate medical care is virtually impossible, for whom housing is overly expensive and often inadequate at any price.

We are all at fault because we deal with issues, with broad questions, when we should be dealing with people, with small questions. We should be asking not "What ails you?" but "Where does it hurt?" We have somatized our problems. We ache all over and we have been conditioned to think that's the way it ought to be, that despair is the human condition and cruelty its cure. That may have been a perfectly good answer for the people who lived in the caves, in the hunger and thirst of the deserts, in the darkness of the European forests or the emptiness of North American winters on the plains, in the Dark Ages, in the sacrificial ages of South America and in the despotic ages of Europe, in preindustrial poverty, in colonial wickedness and postindustrial bewilderment. But today we can do anything, we can cure anything.

Why then are we raising Cain? Why do so few of us look into the eyes of our children and dare to say: "Here we are, we *are* your familiy and we *will* care for you?" Is it because we may have all become commercially objectified, and turned, alas, to stone?

The Influence of the Family On the Woman Writer: A New Perspective

BY KAREN VANDERVEN

It has long been stated that the major contributions to the creative, scientific and industrial advances of society have been made by men. For example, only 26% of the famous people studied by the Goertzels in *300 Eminent Personalities* (1978) were women. These authors state that this is an increase over the number of women represented in their earlier book, *Cradles of Eminence*, and suggest that even the recent percentage is low. The most commonly offered explanations for this unbalanced representation of women among the prominent is that women's innate biological dispositions, along with their child bearing, child rearing and overall domestic functions, have prevented them from making truly outstanding achievements.

In the area of literary production, this phenomenon has also taken place and is well documented by Tillie Olsen in *Silences* (1978), a book concerned with identifying those circumstances that have impeded the creation of literature. The "silences" she discusses are not those which inevitably come to the artist to allow for refueling and quiet generation of new approaches; rather they are generated by restrictive life situations such as poverty, censorship, and the general vicissitudes of life, particularly as they confront women. Of high achieving women writers of the 19th century, Olsen states, most never married and until very recently in the 20th century, this situation has continued. Olsen rejects the stereotyped explanation that women's literary productivity is less because "women have no need, some say no capacity, to create art, because they can create babies" (p. 16). Rather, she feels, the motivation for creativity is inherent in both sexes, superseding reproductive functions. Periods of silence, in which writing does not take place, are imposed by "circumstances, inner or outer, which oppose the needs of creation" (p. 17). Women have traditionally been involved in meeting other persons' needs before their own, which is among the circumstances contributing to "silences;" women do not have wives to keep their worlds together for them so they are free to create.

The evidence that women writers have been less creative than men, particularly in the period prior to the 70s and the growing impact of the women's movement, is compelling. Olsen herself states that there has been one woman writer for every twelve men. Yet, there is some fascinating--although not extensive--evidence to suggest that rather than being a hindrance to literary creativity, child-rearing responsibilities in particular have in fact released creative forces and talents previously blocked or unrecognized by their possessor.

One interesting example is the well known "confessional" poet and prose author, Sylvia Plath, who, as a result of her tragic suicide at age 30, has been considered by some to be a victim of society's oppression of women. It is true that the circumstances of the last part of her life made it difficult to reconcile time needed for writing with other demands, including those of maintaing a single parent household in another country. Yet Plath herself frequently stated her commitment to homemaking as well as her writing and had expressed a wish for having many children.

It is recognized by Plath critics that the most productive time in her writing career took place immediately following the birth of her first child:... "most of the poems in *The Colossus* were written during the first three years of her marriage, from 1956 to 1959. The *real* poems began in 1960, after the birth of her daughter Frieda. It is as though the child were a proof of her identity, as though it liberated her into her real self. I think this guess is borne out by the fact that her most creative period followed the birth of her son, two years later. This triggered off an extraordinary outburst." (A. Alvarez, 1970, p. 58 - 59).

While the poet Anne Sexton began writing poetry in

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high school, it was not until she had children that she, who had never been an outstanding student nor particularly oriented towards a career, began flourishing as a poet. In a letter written in 1959, she describes her current hunger for learning which was in great contrast to her fear of trying in childhood (L. Sexton, and L. Ames, eds., 1977.) In the poem "Double Images" she describes how the birth of her daughter helped her reconcile her own existence; she indicated that she needed the child to help her find herself.

Barbara Grizzutti Harrison, a contemporary writer, states in "Write the Truth My Son Said. Write About Me" (*Ms.*, January, 1978) ..."the 'aren't you lucky they're (children) gone 'people say, Now you can work undisturbed. What I'm not sure they understand--what I'm not sure I've always understood--is that I might never have done any good work at all had it not been for the fact of their existence...they are also nourishing." She continues to describe the feelings of self-confidence generated in her by her pregnancy.

Continuing in the same line of thought is Sara Ruddick in her article "A Work of My Own" in *Working It Out* (1977), a book concerning the role of work in women's lives and the ways in which they reconcile it with other activities and responsibilities. Ruddick, whose academic career has included substantial writing, describes how a "work paralysis" was resolved following the birth of a child. She states, "The conjunction of work and maternity is puzzling. Why should new parenthood, which subtracts enormously from the time available for work, nonetheless make work more likely." She reports that other women have reported a similar experience and then says, "infant care...bred a general self-confidence...strength came from such a common and womanly experience." (p. 140 - 141).

Thus, an interesting perspective emerges on the entrenched position that the family context restrains the productivity of a woman whose work includes an ample amount of writing. While, as Ruddick stated, this is quite puzzling, a general attempt at an explanation can be offered: First of all, women who are likely to make a commitment to writing or other professions with a large component of writing activity, are likely to be less "traditional" in their sex-role development, tending to be androgynous in interests and activities. This is in line with descriptions of the dynamics of creative people which indicate that creative individuals are likely to have in their personalities traits which are considered both masculine and feminine. (Bardwick, 1971; Tyler, 1978.) As a result, these intelligent, spirited and energetic women experienced conflict with the more traditional and stereotyped expectations which up until very recently have been held out for women in society. It is possible that the immediate result of this conflict is a blocking of working productivity and a lowering of self-esteem. The having of and caring for a child and an increase of self-esteem have been linked by numerous scholars, including Bardwick (1971), who says, parenthood is "an extraordinary source of self-esteem ... and a most important source of confidence" (1971, p. 212). Thus, for these women already disposed towards creative achievement but possibly impeded at a certain point of their life by sex-role conflict, the assumption of the parental role actually liberates creativity by increasing their self-esteem and confidence.

It should be pointed out that this explanation may be somewhat oversimplified. It should also be stated that it probably applies only to those whose life and family situation is totally supportive--that is, to those women who have ample help, good health, sufficient income and other protection from the difficult circumstances and traumas of life which can be vitiating of higher level cognitive effort. For many of the women described by Tillie Olsen, extremely trying life conditions over long spans of time undoubtedly contributed to the tragic "silences." Even for those women in totally comfortable and supportive environments, the daily responsibilities of child and household care may somewhat offset the forces which generate creative activity.

Here lies a challenge for the future of family life: ideally, public policy and attitudes will support the family in terms of providing an adequate economic base and other conditions which can make family life for all one of achievement and self-actualization.

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